

# THE PLAIN VIEW



JANUARY 1945

*price sixpence*

*What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure*

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NO. 2.

JANUARY - MARCH 1945

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENTARY . . . . .	25
WHAT IS MAN? . . . . .	H. J. BLACKHAM 28
THE CHALLENGE OF THE RELIGIOUS CLAUSES OF THE EDUCATION ACT . . . . .	VIRGINIA FLEMMING 34
THE REGIME OF CIVILIZATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH . . . . .	JOHN KATZ 40
BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .	
ONE KIND OF RELIGION . . . . .	HELEN WODEHOUSE 44
ECONOMIC DESTINY . . . . .	R. G. HAWTREY 45
FULL EMPLOYMENT IN A FREE SOCIETY . . . . .	SIR WILLIAM BEVERIDGE 45
THE ROAD TO SERFDOM . . . . .	F. A. HAYEK 46
TAIL-PIECE . . . . .	48
TO THE READER . . . . .	<i>Inside Back Cover</i>

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Published by The Ethical Union,  
41/42, Chandos House, Buckingham Gate,  
London, S.W.1.

## COMMENTARY

GERMAN TRAGEDY. Talk of a soft peace or a hard peace for Germany, as Mr. Eden says, is to be deplored. It is the wrong approach. But what is the right one? The time has gone by when the first principle of peace-making was to get the defeated power on to her feet again, so that the Concert of Europe might be restored and the balance of power recovered without dangerous delay. If our world is nearer to universal peace, it is also a harsher, more terrible world in some of its aspects. The model for the new settlement will not be the Congress of Vienna nor that of Versailles. Hearing what is said in some quarters now, one might suppose that a fair descriptive image of it as far as it concerns Germany might be the sombre sentence misquoted from Tacitus, "they make a desert, and they call it peace": so dark is the character of this problem. In thinking of Germany, we see only the tortures, massacres, and devastation in the lands which she has overrun. It extends from the visible to the invisible, and can never be measured. The blackness of Nazi crimes and the narrowness of Europe's escape dominate the whole scene. But in the background is Germany herself with the blood on her hands; and it is a sense of her tragedy that can restore our sanity in dealing with her.

For her tragedy is as much a fact as the wrong which she has done to the peoples of Europe. In the whole range of human history there has been no greater tragedy. She was great, in achievement, in qualities, in possibilities, in promise. Even those of us who love the French genius, and are repelled by the German, must acknowledge her greatness. She was great and would have achieved an even greater destiny, but she was flawed by militarism and other faults, and beset by historical difficulties which made it her fate not to achieve political maturity and wisdom in time. In this sordid outcome, we cannot love, honour, nor respect her; but we must not belittle her. Standing in the ruin which she has made of Europe, we must see her standing in the ruin which she has made of herself. The new leaders, if they come, who will build up a nation anxious to make spiritual reparation to Europe will only be enabled to do that (and it is possible) if they are allowed to form their imagination on this tragedy of their people. We know the dangerous romanticism and the sentimentality of the German temperament, and their proneness to self-pity, but, for all that, Germany must have, she must be allowed and encouraged to have, a *mystique*, if she is to become reconciled to herself and tread the painful road back to fellowship with the nations: she will need it as Pétain's France never did need it. The only *mystique* which will not be dangerous is the tragic sense of her own ruin of her own greatness, for this is the only one which can be made of moral realities and the only one which we can share with her.

**T**H E UNKNOWN. The elements which will be assembled in the new world after the war will be far from homogeneous. To take only the four chief victor powers, America, Russia, China, and the British Commonwealth; their social and economic systems and policies are remarkably different. And the differences are not merely accidental, but are rooted in historical causes and bound up with the phase of development in each of the countries. If the horizon is widened to take in the defeated powers, Germany and Japan, and, say, India as a new power, the differences are even more disconcerting. And all these differences subsist in a world which has been, as it were, modernized and rationalized overnight, by the development of communications, the interchange of goods and ideas, and the interdependence of interests. It is like the marriage in one body of a reasonable mind and a neurotic temperament, not an uncommon state but never an easy one. Or it is as if Wellsian blueprints had been surreptitiously copied into the statute-book of a respectable nation. Will history be excused the performance of her dialectical processes? Or are they not so predictable after all? The situation is intensely interesting as well as dangerous. Perhaps we shall find that reason has more direct creative influence as well as more authority than we had come to think. Perhaps the "organic" processes in society are more adaptable and responsive than we had imagined. It will be a serious matter if they are not. If we are bound to think in terms of earlier patterns of social development, we are bound to be pessimists. Fortunately, new situations make it reasonable to expect new effects. The maturing of nations, like the maturing of timber, is not one necessary natural process.

**I**NVASI ON AT HOME. The multiplication of forms and of officials, and of their vexatious visitations, rouses the fears and the half-humorous resentment of all good citizens who remember what we are fighting for, and the sacrifices of our fathers before us: humorous, because that best helps you to bear something intolerable and impossible to get rid of, as Low, and Abraham Lincoln, and citizens of totalitarian states have so satisfactorily shown us. It is better to be funny about it than to work yourself up into a serious state of indignation by reading about the new despotism and the road to serfdom. After all, we are not yet actually unable to have our own thoughts, even if "they" are bound to think it more satisfactory if we would report them first and get permission to hold them, which of course they would always be perfectly ready to give.

Why do we make all this silly pretence, when we know in our hearts (or do we?) that all this regimentation is nothing if not freedom itself? If a human being is educated and trained according to his aptitudes and capacities, and goes to the job for which he is most wanted and is most suited, and is assured of a basic income and of the means of

properly bringing up a family, and gets his holiday with pay and the opportunity of spending it abroad, and if he adopts and supports the system which enables him and everybody else to live this life of amenity and practicability of purpose, what else is this but freedom? Rationing is not complained of by those formerly without rations. The Social Service State in all its ramifications and developments is the instrument of freedom, the modern indispensable instrument of freedom for all: it exists for that and for nothing else. Those of us who think otherwise are either cherishing some illegitimate liberty formerly enjoyed, or mechanically registering the protests which had point and punch in earlier days when the instruments of democracy were being formed in opposition to the central authority, but which nowadays, unless raised in the use of those instruments against official irresponsibility, are mindless and tiresome gestures. Or perhaps those who shake their heads over this encroachment on our liberties are thinking of the totalitarian states. Perhaps they have been frightened by Mr. C. S. Lewis in his lecture, "The Abolition of Man." He meant to frighten them. Let them in their panic not lose sight altogether of an elementary distinction between regulations in an authoritarian state under the domination of an opportunist party founded on a spoils system, and regulations in a democratic state under a government which stands or falls on its record of service to the people. For these very regulations are beginning to make it permissible to speak of the common interest. When there were only sectional interests, we were all enemies one of another. But enemies of the common interest can be marked down. However, it is first necessary to call to their senses those who are merely being silly.

**C**OAL. The miners and the mine owners have always given each other hard knocks. What they have said about each other in public and in private for generations is unparalleled in bitterness and brutality in any other industry, including politics. Even the exchanges in the correspondence columns of *The Times* recently kept to the decencies of debate with obvious difficulty. (Not having engaged the services of political pamphleteers, they denied us a gladiatorial spectacle like that which came on later with the discussion of our pre-war foreign policy—an "exchange of courtesies," Mr. Wilfrid Roberts called it.) Can we discount this acerbity as peculiar to the temperament of the industry, so to speak? We cannot. It is a symptom of deep-seated wrongs. In little, we have in this industry such an intractable problem as there was in Ireland and there is in India and Palestine; and the causes are similar. In little; but even more dangerous to the nation, if it is not dealt with promptly and faithfully. And of this there is yet no sign.

## WHAT IS MAN?

IN this editorial article I want to indicate unmistakably our position and to sketch its background, for a journal of this sort offers a most unpromising beginning if its editorial policy is too weak or too confused to be fully and frankly declared to its readers from the outset. In a summary statement, it is our settled general purpose to stimulate the development of the humanist consciousness of man, of society, and of existence, and to apply this consciousness and its motive power to practical personal and social problems. In what follows, I shall try to show what I mean by this statement of our purpose.

The Christian faith is still ably defended and actively advanced. Thinkers of distinction, reputation, and power, some of them very attractive men, maintain its intellectual prestige. As leaders of thought, they make an impressive case for a Christian society, a civilization sustained by the Christian faith and governed by the Christian interpretation of history. They are not eccentrics; their course is not against the main current of the time: for the main official influences are with them, in the Press, the B.B.C., the schools and colleges, the House of Commons, hardly less than in the Church itself. The common assumption is that we are a Christian people and it is our fault that we are not more so. The Christian church has been put in a stronger position by the disaster to civilization which has been so narrowly averted, and it is stirring itself up to make the most of the opportunity offered by a people shocked and unnerved by the blasphemy and obscenity of two world wars and the uncertainty of the future. There is still power in the appeal of the Christian message.

Nevertheless, those who have no enthusiasm for the Christian message, just because they do not believe it or because they fear the effect of Christian beliefs on the human purposes and methods in which they do believe, these rationalists assume that Christianity is doomed and will die out within a few generations because its doctrines are incredible and cannot much longer be maintained. Rationalists should recognize that scepticism is endemic among Christian peoples in Western Europe; and that empty pews are not a symptom of it, anyway—as we have recently been reminded by Menander. Many observers in the 19th century, in the 18th century, in the Renaissance, and even in the Middle Ages, seem to have found irresistible the conclusion that Christianity had practically died out. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that present tendencies do not promise the Christian church a prosperous future. To the sceptic, Christian beliefs are incredible; to the believer, unbelief is incredible. Rationalist libraries make it impossible to believe; theological libraries make it impossible to disbelieve. Each side claims that it has disposed of the case made out by the other. The public go some to one side, some to the other; some halt in perplexity, and some walk away. The minority who think about these things will include many who want

to believe, and for a long time to come it may be possible to believe without falling into contempt. The majority who never think about these things are not by any means informed sceptics; if they hardly know what they do believe, they would not suffer themselves to be called atheists, and would be disturbed by the disappearance of the church. Any cool-minded, reasonably well-informed person who looks at the matter historically and takes account of the present situation must, surely, conclude that Christianity to-day is in a relatively strong position.

On the other hand, the influence of the humanist cause to-day is relatively weak. It was not so the day before yesterday. When John Stuart Mill dominated the universities, and Herbert Spencer the general thinking public, and Matthew Arnold spoke for some and William Morris for others; when positivism could attract to its church of humanity publicists and social thinkers; and university professors of moral philosophy were ready to sponsor and lecture to ethical societies, and ethical societies flourished on the Continent and were influential enough to engage Tolstoy in correspondence on his religious beliefs: in those days, for the eager maturing mind there were alternatives to the Christian church, parties, associations, societies which gave him not merely a programme of reform and the keen sense of comradeship in a cause, but also a glowing conception of his dignity and capacity as a man and his own worth as an individual. We have able and influential thinkers in plenty, but they are isolated. Neither by their thought nor their example do they encourage the formation of strong associations for humanist discipline, collaboration, and influence: We have plenty of associations, but they exist for particular purposes of research or propaganda, and do not make their members members also of humanity. To use old-fashioned phrases (for it was the manner of an earlier time to do these things), our leading thinkers are not concerned to form a great school inspired from the study to furnish the intellectual and moral resources for a strong and convinced party in the country in the humanist cause. Perhaps this sort of language has no contemporary meaning, for it belongs to former (and some would say greater) days. The Marxist philosophy has survived into our own time to do this for members of the Communist parties. And in America, where John Dewey's philosophy has been so influential, there is something comparable to the broad and sustaining movements of opinion which our fathers knew in this country in the 19th century; and there the ethical societies and other humanist religious bodies are strong and well-known. But America to-day is living through the liberal phase which was our day before yesterday.

It will not be clear to a great many rationalists that this lack of a strong, disciplined humanist movement matters very much at all. The moral earnestness of the 19th century will not seem to them to have been an unqualified good, and it has declined, and so has the habit of going to church. Christianity is a religious faith, and if one does not believe

in it, religion goes too. There is plenty for all of us to get on with in the secular affairs of the world. We are more matter of fact than our fathers were. If it is true that the Christian church is in a strong position, good luck to it. In the modern world it is not likely to be able to do much harm, and it may very well do quite a lot of good. If you have not got a rival faith, there is no sense in getting up a party just to oppose it. Of course, it would be different if it could be shown that in the interests of humanity it is necessary to do this. Such, so it seems, might be the run of thought in the minds of most rationalists.

I want to say that we who are publishing this journal do think that it is important in the interests of humanity to develop a humanist alternative to Christianity, and we, therefore, think that it is the duty of rationalists to collaborate in this purpose. In order to try to make good this contention, I shall quote from an article in the *Times' Literary Supplement* of July 29, 1944, which is a review of "The Annihilation of Man," by Mr. Leslie Paul. I quote from the review and not from the book because the article was given foremost place in that issue, and the argument of the article and the selection of the book as first choice for the week are indications of editorial policy, and the editorial policy of an influential journal is more important than the opinion of an obscure writer of a book. The theme of Mr. Paul's book is the spiritual disintegration of the West. "This, then, is the fundamental belief of Mr. Paul's book. . . . Fascism . . . is a revolt against the West. . . . The peoples of the West no longer believe that the ideas of the past century are sufficient answer to the needs of this. They are sceptical, disillusioned, unhappy. The future, which had once seemed so certain, is a dark abyss. The view of life and the universe reached by the West is one that must seem inadequate not only to Nazis but to all of us, whether or not we consciously formulate our views. It is a view that is compendiously expressed in the title of Mr. Paul's book as the Annihilation of Man. The rise of modern science has been marked by many marvels . . . but against these must be set 'the progressive intellectual annihilation of the individual'. This progressive annihilation has been brought about by Utilitarianism, Darwinism, Freudianism, Behaviourism and modern physics." The reviewer then summarizes Mr. Paul's tendentious account of these teachings. Later, he goes on: "Owing to its preoccupation with the scientific method, it [Europe] has ceased to understand, or to value as a whole, anything but the materialist interpretation of the universe. Its spiritual life has fallen into decay. Mr. Paul's remedy in a word is: Back to Christianity! . . . He is not alone in his conclusions. Owing to the present conditions of his life he may not know, for example, that some while ago, after a long life spent in the championship of liberalism and anti-clericalism, Senator Croce startled Italy (then still bound with the chains of Fascism) by declaring that European civilization was based upon Christian values, and that the Church, for all her necessary errors, was the embodiment of those values.

There is a stirring among the intellectual leaders of Europe, and Mr. Paul's message will find echoes in unsuspected quarters."

The reviewer's summary of Mr. Paul's account of the five bodies of teaching which, he says, have resulted in the annihilation of man (and of matter) is too long for quotation. A sample will suffice: "The final result of the application of the theory of the origin of species to the whole material universe has been to deprive it completely of meaning; in a universe of blind chance stoicism and hedonism have some claims to validity, but nothing else."

The seasoned student is not upset by this spiritual terrorism. With a few well-directed taps he can pulverize Mr. Paul's tendentious account of these teachings into the popular dirt of which it is made. Or, for himself, he can dismiss the whole thing at a glance as a tissue of nonsense and a disgrace to the journal in which it has been given prominence and praise. He can dismiss it. But can the general reader? Most important, can the young man who has spent his formative, impressionable years in the armed forces, not in reading and thinking for himself about the great problems and conceptions of human life, but crudely mixing reflections and distractions with the obscenities of war? It is the popular misconceptions which the general reader warmly applauds as abundantly true. Formerly, the Christian preacher terrorized his hearers with the wrath of God and the pains of hell. Now a reputable literary journal terrorizes its readers with the unrelieved horror of a universe revealed by science. The theme is the same: the wrath of God is appeased by the sacrifice of the Son, and the believer is assured of salvation from sin and death; the universe of blind chance, the insubstantial world of matter, the bedevilled automaton of man, is a spectacle which will give us a delicious shiver if it is recognized that the scientists abstract from the world and leave out of account that the man they describe is a son of God and has an eternal individual destiny. The findings of the sciences are not to be rejected as untrue, but Christianity puts them in their place: they are mere matters of interest, not to be taken seriously. Otherwise, there is only terror: the void, and man the automaton.

And where are these mysterious quarters in which Mr. Paul's message will find unexpected welcome? Surely what is meant is that humanists like Croce, shocked not by the revelations of science but by man's mockery of himself, are ready to welcome and support any influence in human affairs which gives tested and consistent witness to the moral truths of man's experience. It is a reproach to humanists if there is no alternative to the zeal and witness of the Christian church. And the reproach ought to become a scandal if the irresponsible individualism of humanists leaves the young men who come back from the forces to become the victims of Christian terrorism.

Two questions may be asked: what does it really matter? And what can be done about it? It matters because there is on the agenda an

immense, hopeful, and exhilarating programme of human betterment, and the dynamic of this programme is a new, well-founded, common conception of man. It matters because it is untrue that the way of reconciliation with the universe revealed by science is the way of escape; and if this dangerous lie is allowed to spread it threatens to make a disaster of the next phase of human development. It matters to humanity as much as it matters to a person that when he becomes a man he shall put away childish things, and not continue to speak as a child, to feel as a child, and to think as a child. For we have known in part and seen ourselves as in a mirror, darkly, and with the aid of pictures and riddles, but the time has come to know more perfectly and to see ourselves face to face.

What can humanists do that they are not doing? It would be inexcusably perverse and ungrateful to overlook or to underestimate the immense service of the Rationalist Press Association over long years to the maturing mind and to the general reader. Their reprints and publications have popularized scientific information, stimulated men and women to think for themselves, and fed their imaginations on the glory of man. And with their work they have associated names of the highest prestige in science. It is far from a disparagement of this long-continued beneficent rationalist action to say that something else is now necessary as well, because it is now possible. The work of the Rationalist Press Association has helped to make it possible. What is now necessary is an attempt to bring to a focus in a conception of man all relevant knowledge. Not a descriptive synthesis of the sciences relevant to this conception—although that might form a necessary part of the attempt; but an original conception emerging from a new experience of man informed by the assimilation of all relevant knowledge. Christian theology does not merely inform a man on the evidence of Christ's revelation and its attestors that he is a son of God; its concern is to lead him to obtain a personal experience of his sonship in living relations with God; and the ministration of the church has no other function. Similarly, humanism cannot simply tell a man that he is a material organism and a social animal, and add that he is an end in himself and an inviolable personality. He must be given a genuine experience of himself as a man in full concreteness. This is not a gratuitous attempt to follow the example of Christian theology. Its necessity comes quite independently from the nature of knowledge. Knowledge has its meaning in its reference to actual things, informing or creating new experience of them; and knowledge relevant to man entails, if it is fulfilled as knowledge, man's individual experience of himself, the person's discovery of himself. This has to be achieved by bringing to a focus in outstanding individual experience the abstract knowledge of the several scientific specialisms, giving new dimensions to the universe of man constructed by the humanism of an older tradition matured in the library and in the schools of philosophy. It cannot be done straightway, and it cannot be

done for the ordinary man until it has been done by competent original minds for themselves. It must begin with a movement of thought, a sense of direction, a formulation of purpose. Before the achievement of personal experience, there is much methodological spade work to be done in sifting what is relevant and what is essential to the purpose from what is not relevant or not essential. (Is it necessary to be psycho-analysed, for example?) Man receives so many accounts of himself: from the biologist and the bio-chemist and the physiologist; from the psychologist and the psychiatrist; from the historian and the sociologist; from the poet and from the metaphysician and from the great religions; and from still other sources and other informants. Such accounts are full of inconsistencies, and, for the most part, even the most rationalist of us must borrow from them more or less arbitrarily or wilfully. Hence such accounts of the Human Situation as Professor Macneile Dixon gave in his Gifford lectures. There is much need through a methodical creation of personal experience to build up an adequate well-founded general conception, which shall include with the disciplined explorations of science the possibilities of good and evil, and their conditions, which history and man's genius disclose: not a speculative survey, but a solid conception which every man can prove bit by bit in the discovery of himself. It is necessary that the ordinary person shall learn in an experience of himself that he is genetically and culturally and imaginatively so much more than himself, and exactly what it means to be himself, and what that humanity is from which he is inseparable; and he must, as it were, catch sight in "man's glassy essence" of flashes of light from the non-human universe, learning to know and to love, and not to fear nor to despise, the matter of which he is wonderfully and fearfully made; for it is the soul of irrationality to blinker the individual consciousness of the self, and shy violently at sight of the dust.

This, then, is a religious task for humanists, religious because such a conception of man gives the motive power to civilization and is the imaginative consolation of human existence. We call upon all humanists to brood on this problem, and we ask for a lead. This conception, if it can be furnished, will be the great school inspired from the study which will provide resources for the local groups of a humanist movement in the country capable of offering an alternative to Christianity, a movement which will bring men to the personal discovery of themselves in their individuality and their universality, and initiate them into the life of humanity, and reconcile them to the world revealed by science, and, above all, nerve them to lay hold of the future of man.

Man has become a platitude to himself, and his "intellectual annihilation," by Mr. Paul or any other, will do no great harm as a step to the restatement of what he is. Christians cannot make this restatement. Humanists can if they will first recognize the need for it, and then undertake the arduous discipline and concentration which are required. Humanism as an alternative to Christianity means a good deal more

than being versed in science or in letters: it means the profoundest experience of man which the human being can achieve, realized in the consciousness of the self.

What can be expected from such a doctrine of man, and how can it be stated? It is silly to pretend that humanism is so badly in need of this doctrine that meanwhile we are helpless and at a standstill. In the history of thought, various forms of humanism have found a starting-point in letters, or science, or ethics, or philosophy; and undoubtedly it has been perfectly possible to proceed from such starting-points to the abundant enjoyment and improvement of the world, which is the main matter. Nevertheless, a doctrine of man is the natural foundation of humanism, and it is a present need in philosophy. Of course, it is true that every philosophy and every religion is a doctrine of man, and that any doctrine of man must be greatly more than a doctrine of man. Nevertheless, a new and direct approach to the problem by a careful exploration of experience in the light of established knowledge is called for, and is the way to a new beginning. It can be expected to bring to a focus agreement and disagreement on fundamental issues, and to bring discipline into a field of thought still wild and wilful. If man is a free spirit, let us say precisely what are the conditions, the possibilities, and the limitations of this spirit. Above all, the doctrine is useless unless it is so stated that it leads individual persons to find and touch in themselves the character and behaviour of matter and of mind and of spirit and to feel the tendency and discern the consummation of the living movement which man himself is, and which he interprets in social purpose and affirms in expressible vitality.

Our sense of this problem lying at the heart of the human situation is the background to our humanist position in the conduct of this journal. In the foreground are the practical matters to which individual men and women have to address themselves in the personal and social life of our time. The mere sense of a central problem is not an achievement of truth, is not that commanding and serene position of which Lucretius speaks, "from which you may look down upon others and see them wandering all abroad and going astray in their search for the path of life"; but neither is it a confession of weakness: it *is* a position, the only available position, like that afforded to Hannibal by the one surviving elephant, on which he rode above the flood waters of the Arno forward into his campaign.

H. J. BLACKHAM.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE RELIGIOUS CLAUSES OF THE EDUCATION ACT.

IN 1944 for the first time our parliament has taken an active, positive line about the teaching of Christian religion in our State schools. Not only has it for the first time made it compulsory for State-aided

schools to provide religious\* teaching and to begin the day with a corporate act of worship, but also by the statutory recognition of the "agreed syllabus" it has given strong encouragement to the movement for securing *better* non-denominational Christian teaching in the schools. This, surely, is a thought-provoking event at a moment when the proportion of the adult population which has lapsed from any church membership and from any active expression of Christian belief is probably larger than ever before.

The Religious clauses of the Education Act will not, of course, revolutionize practice, but only rivet present custom by law upon the future, unless the law comes one day to be reversed. For many years there have, by custom, been both "Religious" lessons and daily acts of worship in all our schools which are aided or provided by the State, but the rôle of Parliament has been to prevent such activities from being sectarian in the schools wholly provided by the State. We should remember that until 1870 our own elementary schools were provided by religious groups, with very meagre State aid. When school boards were then established to set up more schools where they were needed, with money from the rates, it was taken for granted that there would be instruction in the Christian religion. The only anxiety was how to cut through sectarian animosity about the form which the instruction should take. The solution was the Cowper-Temple clause forbidding the use of the formularies of any denomination. Moreover, the religious lesson had to come at the beginning or end of a school session to enable parents the more easily to "withdraw" their children from it if they wished.

The new Act still authorizes such withdrawals, but religious instruction may now be given at any hour in order that each school may make the most use of those of its teachers who are best qualified to give religious instruction. If this clause works as it is intended to work, all instruction (except in Jewish schools) will be given by teachers who are believing Christians properly prepared to give orthodox teaching. There will be an end to any tendency to impart less orthodox views or to concentrate on "mere ethics" or to turn the subject into "citizenship." The idea is to raise the standard of religious instruction. At the same time, an administrative alteration has been made tending to the same result. In the past, so controversial was the subject of religion that even when it was studied at a training college it did not "count" in the teachers' certificate examination. Now it is to "count," which is a definite encouragement to study the subject, when one considers the crowded curriculum of training college students. Will an adequate flow of Christian teachers be forthcoming, and what will be their influence upon children from indifferent or critical homes?

It is worth considering how this new drive to ensure proper Christian teaching has been able to get the sanction of our statute book in the present state of public opinion. The event reveals the degree to which

\* In effect, Christian or Jewish teaching, though neither of these words is mentioned in the Act.

the Church of England and the other Protestant denominations have sunk their mutual hostilities and have become concerned for the preservation and revivification of a common heritage of essential Christianity. Because of the drift from church and from the faith, and because of the alarming developments in other countries, they feel the more impelled to secure contact with the rising generation in the schools. Though the new Act offers more generous financial assistance to denominational schools than ever before, the standard of school buildings is rising at the same time, particularly of those connected with the reform of "secondary" education for all children over the age of eleven. Thus even under the new Act an appreciable expenditure from voluntary sources will be needed if a school is to retain its fully denominational character; and for very many of the Church of England schools it is pretty certain that these voluntary funds will not be forthcoming, and that the schools will in future provide only limited facilities, if any at all, for specifically Church of England teaching. Many of the leaders of the Church are ready to accept this result for the sake of educational improvement, and they are concentrating on good non-denominational teaching in all the State schools. The Roman Catholics alone refuse to back this compromise. For the first time, then, we have all the Protestant Christian opinion in this country roused and united to secure the best possible teaching of their common religion in our State schools. But how has this active minority found such general support and met so little opposition? Do people really want their children educated in a religion from which they themselves have lapsed? Let us consider the state of mind of the public outside the churches which has refrained from opposing this part of the new Act.

Beyond the genuinely believing Protestant circles in this country is a wide range of people, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, who care for the quality of life, who care for justice, honesty, public spirit, parental responsibility, kindness and the devotion which is capable of sacrifice. These people care for the character of individuals and for the kind of society they form. I have suggested only a skeleton of all that they are concerned about. But they are not at all clear in their minds just how far it is all related to or bound up with the whole Christian faith, or how far they themselves still hold that faith or are right in not holding it. Christians are ever ready to assure them that without the full faith high morality melts away. In varying degrees, they do believe in a God who is Creator and Father; or they wish they could believe in Him; or they just do not. Militant atheists under sixty years of age hardly exist any more. In varying degrees, those outside the churches think Christ was "divine," was a unique revealer of the highest way of life, a great teacher and exemplar, or even find him "not very helpful." Many have not carefully studied the New Testament for themselves in adult life, and only phrases stick in their minds. When it comes to bringing up their own children, or educating the nation's children, they find that

there is no positive, developed alternative to the Christian tradition. They do not themselves know how to convey their own sense of values explicitly, nor any summed-up view of the universe, nor the nature of their own moral life; and they feel "negative" in not holding the full faith, and, often, isolated in their own particular way of thinking. They have little sense of holding a key to life in their simple interest in the world, their ethical convictions, their delight in beauty. Therefore, they shrink from influencing their children away from the traditional beliefs. Thus there arises in a wide section of the thoughtful public who are not really believing Christians a tendency to acquiesce silently in the teaching of doctrine they do not profess and live by.

At the time of the Education Act of 1902—when denominational schools were first being put on the rates—there was not only active hostility from the Free Churches, but also well-organized opposition from those who wanted non-theological moral education in State schools and who were ready with positive suggestions to this end. This time there was only a very feeble protest against the assumption that all moral education must rest on Christian teaching. There were references in the Parliamentary debates to the need for teaching that there is good in all the great religions, but the orthodox have no difficulty in showing that, for the young at any rate, a study of comparative religion is no substitute for a religious education. Throughout the whole of the recent debate there was no clear case stated for non-theological ethical education. A plea was made for "the point of view of the general public" to be represented on the committees for adopting an agreed syllabus. But no one said what that point of view is.

It seems that acquiescence shades off into inarticulate disagreement, but nowhere is there effective opposition because nowhere is there any considerable group of people with a formulated alternative spiritual conviction which they wish to have conveyed to the coming generation. There is in this country still a small body of people in the Ethical Movement which upholds the claim of "the good life" on humanity in virtue of its intrinsic worth and natural results, independent of belief in a transcendent Being whose purpose and will we are here to discover and fulfil. But this movement is extremely small and was on this occasion dumb, though in the debate in the Commons reference was made to it as being the community to which Lord Snell belonged.

What is it, then, that is going to be taught to the children of "the general public"? Most emphatically, not only the ethical teaching of Jesus Christ, not just Christian principles and ideals (though in the debate it was clear that crude morality was what most of those in the Commons who took part were concerned about). Such an idea is explicitly rejected by leading Christians. The Act lays down that each education authority is to adopt an agreed syllabus. The syllabus is to be agreed upon by a committee of representatives of the teachers in the locality, the denominations in the locality, and the local authority. It would be well for the

public to study some of the already existing syllabuses, such as the famous Cambridge one, or the Surrey or West Riding syllabus. They are impressive in their spiritual approach, and in the enlightened and wide scholarship upon which they are based. They also are informed by wide experience of children of all ages. But, very properly for any Christian teaching, they revolve around the belief in God, the God who revealed His nature in Jesus Christ. The smallest children are to be led to associate all that appeals to them in nature with the God who made all creatures and cares for them. They are to be shown how he provides for all and loves them all and wants them all to care for each other. Attention is to be riveted upon the Christ child as His greatest gift, before much more can be taught. Then, gradually, they are to be led on to a deeper understanding of the Personality of Christ, and shown how he came as the final revelation of God's nature and purpose for man, after the long historical development recorded in the Old Testament. They are to proceed to considerable knowledge of the growth of the Church and its doctrines and worship. From all this, prayer emerges as the basic duty, since it is from the worship of God properly conceived that we are able to fulfil His will.

The upshot is that the only explicit education our children are to get in recognizing the greatly good, or in conceiving their own destiny and duty, will all be in terms of God's nature, purpose, and will, and His self-revelation in Jesus Christ and in the Church through the Holy Ghost. Are these the ideas in which English men and women really live and move and have their being? If not, will they really grip their children, or will the children simply have in their turn to go through the process of discarding this framework? Are these the terms in which our people would express themselves if they could be stimulated into trying boldly to state their living convictions? There must be very many who though not actively believing Christians yet believe that all human beings are under the obligation to rise above selfish greed and ambition, sloth and cowardice, indifference and vindictiveness, into a consciousness of being one of the world-wide multitude for whom they must on occasion take consideration as for themselves, and with whom they must seek to work in harmony. Should they welcome this reforming and riveting of Christian teaching for lack of any alternative? Perhaps it is as well for the moment that there should be competent representation of the Christian religion in our schools. It will at least present to nearly all children one great historic conception of life and the supreme example of human greatness. And yet those to whom the theology is but a myth, expressing much truth, perhaps, but a myth, must feel that the situation is a challenge to them. It challenges them to discover and express those things which they do really believe about how human beings should live, in order that this can be presented to their children instead of doctrine which they do not believe. At present, they cannot expect the schools to do this. They must, therefore, be ready to help those who

leave school unconvinced Christians to think out their own position; and gradually they must build up a process of religious or moral education of their own, a thing most difficult for isolated parents to do.

I should like to suggest some vital starting-points which ethical non-theists have in common and should develop into an articulate common tradition. For unless they take the trouble to seize upon the guiding convictions of their lives and formulate them coherently, and discover other people who share their outlook and can help them, they are in a very weak position. Some of the points which need stating and battling for seem so simple as not to be worth making. For instance, the simple fact that without faith in God there is vivid and all-pervading moral experience; there is the passionate recognition of our obligation to consider others as we do ourselves, and the perception that this obligation rests upon all men; there is the deep reverence for those who live and die for world-wide social justice, and a fuller, wider charity between men; there is the desire to have self purged of all distorting self-centredness. These simple facts are rarely seen to be the vital embryo of a fully dedicated life, a positive "religion." Most Christians are incapable of realizing that they are facts. They curiously belittle and libel the spiritual life of those who do not believe in God, denying to them appreciation of spiritual qualities of character as distinct from material comforts, assuming that their morality is legalistic and limited, arid. We must express the true nature of ethical experience. Those who have it are not at sea, are not in a negative position; they have found purpose arising directly from their discovery of the right relation between the self and the universe in which it exists, from their discovery of what is good and bad in human life. We must also pool our knowledge of how the spirit of an ethical man works, for undoubtedly there is a whole field of experience corresponding to Christian prayer in which he not only lays aside his selfish, impulsive will and takes up his will freshly inspired towards the right, but also in so doing finds peace and joy and power. We must be able to convey our recognition of the need for constantly returning to fresh contemplation and reflection. The idea of listening for the voice of God directed people to a real spiritual activity. The demands and exigencies of life direct us to it also, but we are utterly inarticulate about it, and many are ignorant of the processes of the spirit. In truth, the life of a deeply ethical man contains experiences very much akin to that of communion with God. At times, the difference seems only a matter of words; but the whole framework of thought and starting-points of conviction are different. Christians are only too ready to assure the world that without God man can make no change for the better in himself and cuts himself off from spiritual sustenance. We must make clear to ourselves the nature of man's task if he seeks regeneration. "Merely" ethical people are accused of not reckoning with the tendency to evil in human nature. We are accused of thinking that by altering circumstances we can "perfect" man. But to-day no one can be blind

to the immense power of evil when whole groups of men are organized and nurtured in its principles. Only a little reflection is needed to see how hard it is in any group to purge away group egotism. Only a little more reflection will show people the evil tendencies in themselves as well as in those about them. Experience of small children shows that they have all the impulses of selfish brutes combined with spontaneous love and a sense of justice. There will, therefore, always be a problem of the spiritual education and life-long self-direction of every child born into this world. This would remain even when all families were well fed and clothed and housed, and when we had a more social economic system.

If those who do not share the Christian theology began really to feel responsible for the life of the people, they would find themselves working out a commonly accepted scheme of moral or spiritual education. Such education would, of course, not lie exclusively nor chiefly in specific lessons, nor in "lessons" at all, but it must issue in a conception of a way of life for each individual and for man in society.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING.

## THE REGIME OF CIVILIZATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The Things that are not Caesar's. By Jacques Maritain. 1927.  
True Humanism. By Jacques Maritain. 1936.

We have been friends together. By Raissa Maritain. 1943.

The Rights of Man. By Jacques Maritain. 1944.

EVEN philosophers may sometimes learn from history; and when history flies bombs through their study windows, they are encouraged to learn quickly. A great deal of French, as well as world, history has been made between 1927 when Mr. Maritain wrote "The Things that are not Caesar's," and 1944, when he wrote "The Rights of Man." In 1927 France was still the leader of European civilization. True, she was sickening with class conflicts, but even the most knowledgeable of her spiritual consultants did not foresee the heart failure of 1940. After that catastrophe, it was hard for Frenchmen to escape despair. Madame Maritain begins her book with the words, "There is no longer any future for me in this world. Life for me draws to a close, ended by the catastrophe that has plunged France into mourning . . . Christ's Kingdom is not of this world—in how cruel a light this truth now stands out!"

Is Christ's Kingdom a celestial glory entirely beyond time and change, or can rays from it penetrate on occasion the darkness of the human cave? What is the place of Catholicism in civilization and of civilization in Catholicism? Maritain's engagement with these questions have made his books of international importance.

"The Things that are not Caesar's" is an enthusiastic defence of Pope

Pius XI., who in 1926 condemned the works of Charles Maurras. Maurras was the intellectual leader of the French reactionaries, who were at once Catholic, Royalist—sentimentally Royalist—and violently anti-republican. How was it that Maurras was condemned by Rome when, to take a notorious and more recent example, General Franco has been acclaimed? The answer is that Maurras, a brilliant French intellect, had not learnt the wisdom of camouflage and that Franco, a pedestrian Spanish militarist, had learnt little else. Maurras and Franco are both of them political Catholics who regard the Church “as the custodian of social order and the Latin civilization” and not as “the mystic Body of Christ.” “They exemplify the terribly general tendency of the Conservative world to link the defence of its material interests to the defence of religion.” Maurras was condemned because he was so indiscreet as to combine political Catholicism with unconcealed Atheism. “I am a Catholic,” he said, “but not a Christian.” That was too much for the Papacy.

Maurras, it seemed, was mistaken in regarding the Pope as the custodian of Latin Civilization and in forgetting that he is “the visible head of the Mystical Body, essentially supra-temporal, supra-political, supra-national, supra-cultural, of which Christ is the invisible head . . . If he is sovereign of the Vatican City, it is precisely so that . . . he shall lose all human nationality.” In fact, Maritain makes out the Pope to be an Invisible Man who, like the hero of H. G. Wells’s story, has to wrap up his head in bandages in order to be visible at all.

But if the Catholic Church dissociates itself from every civilization because it is “ordained to Eternal Life,” how can the Pope claim a right to intervene in the affairs of our Western civilization? If we are to take Catholic metaphysicians seriously—and Maritain is a very serious Catholic metaphysician equipped with all the most up-to-date weapons from the Neo-Thomist arsenal—we must first of all contemplate our little, finite, terrestrial sphere with its masses of semi-civilized, would-be civilized, as well as of decivilized human beings, and then try to imagine the infinite sphere of Totality, total in time and space, and set in motion and kept moving by a God who dwells outside it. If we take the infinite sphere seriously, it swallows up the finite. If we take the finite sphere seriously, we become indifferent to the infinite. What is difficult to discover is the plane in which these two spheres intersect.

We may go further and ask whether Catholic Theism, “in its metaphysical depths and absolute radicalism,” can really be lived without leading inexorably to the annihilation of all civilized life. In his book, “True Humanism,” Maritain has framed a question about Marxist Atheism in these very terms. When this book was written, there was still some doubt as to whether Stalinist Russia would survive. To-day that doubt has lifted. Stalin does not seem to worry about the metaphysical depths of Marxism. Perhaps that is the reason Stalin has survived. Those Bolshevik intellectuals—Bukharin, for instance—who worried over-

much, have not been so fortunate. What Stalin is concerned about is the planning of Soviet civilization. And what the great Medieval Popes were concerned about was not the metaphysical depths of the Scheme of Redemption but the planning of Medieval civilization. The Popes had to salvage fragments of Graeco-Roman and Jewish civilization, to raise them to a temperature when they were emotionally incandescent, and then to fuse them together, hammering out a cultural instrument for the training and schooling of the spirited Barbarians of the North. Cathedrals, universities, and parliaments are some of the values created by this Medieval civilization.

But if we look, not at the humanist values of Catholic civilization, but at the "metaphysical depths" of Catholic theology, we seem to arrive at the "theological inhumanity" with which Maritain charges St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Jansenius, and Karl Barth. "As a result of original sin man is taken to be essentially corrupt." His life, and works, and civilization are all corrupt. This type of metaphysical theology "demands the annihilation of man before God." Man has nothing to hope for except the unmerited gift of grace from the hands of the Redeemer.

It would seem then that if we try to live Theism with metaphysical seriousness, we fall into annihilating inhumanism. Civilization is swallowed up by religion. Religion, instead of being, like art, one of the interests of civilization, is dropsically swollen into the sole substance, the sole nutriment of human life. Only mystics and mystical metaphysicians can be sustained by it. Ordinary folk cannot live on a pure extract of vitamin A without the roughage containing all the other vitamins necessary for spiritual health.

The mystic is a solitary. In the terms of Whitehead's famous definition, his religion is what he does with his solitariness. He is solitary because he cannot find his peace in society. Society is bankrupt, or demoralised, or enslaved. Society has entered into the short or long twilight of civilization. Society is no longer a community but a congeries of colliding atoms. There is peace in death, but not in the agony of dying or of giving birth. At such crises of history a St. Paul, a St. Augustine, a Luther, and in our own day, a Karl Barth despair of man and of society and of the civilization which only individuals organised in society can create. These theologians debunk man, and that may perhaps be good for man's health. But they also emasculate man by stigmatising all his creative initiatives as evil and by expropriating for the benefit of God's estate such spots of human goodness as can be credited to grace. And the outcome is that God paralyses man. Man's six thousand years of adventuring in the quest for civilization are dismissed as arrogance and vanity. The little good man has achieved during the last six thousand years and may achieve during the next six million years is only a ghostly shadow of what in God exists already. History is futility. Civilization is a parade of swaggering fools. The

human creature is never genuinely creative. God is the sole creator. And what He creates does not need time and history for its development. Everything that truly exists, exists already. And so Christian theology culminates in inhumanism.

Maritain struggles to escape from the consequences of his own logic. He is himself the most charitable and broad-minded of humanists. He envisages a world society in which Catholics and Atheists, aristocrats and communists, professors and labourers shall freely and fraternally collaborate. The events of 1914-1944 have made him into a staunch republican and democrat. And yet he still insists that a "True Humanism" must be "theocentric and not anthropocentric." He recognises that Russian Communism is dynamic because it is anthropocentric, spreading throughout the Soviet Commonwealth the joy of building a great and a shared civilization. He recognises too how easily the doctrine that Christ's Kingdom comes at the end of history and not during history, can be exploited by a Maurras and a Franco. And yet he still believes that Catholic theology, as interpreted by St. Thomas, is the proper foundation for humanism.

Jacques Maritain and his wife are both of them recent converts to Catholicism. Perhaps in this page of personal history we shall find an explanation of his inconclusive mental fight between theocentric and anthropocentric humanism.

Madame Maritain has told very movingly the story of her life. Born of Jewish parents at Marioupol on the Sea of Azov she was brought by them to Paris where they made their home. From being practising Jews her parents were soon assimilated to the free-thinking Parisian intelligentsia. She was sent to study philosophy at the university and there she met Jacques Maritain. Maritain had been baptised a Protestant. French Protestantism is the cold religion of detached individualists unwarmed by the central tradition of the French community. These two orphans of the spirit found their spiritual home in the Catholic Church.

If a man is a practising Jew or Catholic, he belongs to a community. He is sustained by sharing intimately in a common way of life. He is freed from the anxiety of having to invent for himself a new morality and a new philosophy of life and of marketing them in a world of gullible purchasers and unscrupulous competitors. It is the community-life which is central to Judaism and Catholicism, and not the creed. It is the church, the organised community, which is the real carrier and creator of Jewish and Catholic civilization and not the metaphysical Supreme Being whom they invoke.

Maritain is an intellectual. Intellectuals need homes for the spirit as well as for the body, but they do not care to speak of such things. Now St. Thomas Aquinas is also an intellectual, and he has recently been appointed official philosopher to the Catholic Church. St. Thomas ranks with the greatest of the philosophers. He is of the company of Aristotle,

Spinoza and Kant. So St. Thomas was chosen by Maritain as his house agent, responsible for maintaining his new spiritual home.

But philosophers, like poets, recall in tranquillity the incidents of the battle for life and civilization. They close an epoch; they do not inaugurate one. Within half a century of the death of St. Thomas, the Popes were in exile at Avignon and Medieval civilization had fallen into a steep decline. Philosophy has never saved a civilization; and only rarely has it prolonged its life. Philosophy is apt to create the illusion that it is a magical refrigerator which will keep a civilization, and the religion it carries with it, immune from infection by the bacteria of time and change. But philosophy does not vivify a civilization but embalms it. Even Maritain on occasion writes as though for all eternity no healthy society is conceivable unless it consists of feudal gentry, guild craftsmen, agricultural labourers, and Neo-Thomist scholastics.

Judging by his last book, Maritain's passion for St. Thomas has cooled considerably. Perhaps he is beginning to doubt whether the foundations of a true humanism can really be laid in the transcendent heaven of St. Thomas. Perhaps, after all, true humanism, for better or for worse, can never be anything if not anthropocentric.

JOHN KATZ.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

ONE KIND OF RELIGION. By Helen Wodehouse. Cambridge University Press, 8/6.

Dr. Wodehouse has written a fine book which draws comment but defies, and would rebuke, summary or extended description. There is no substitute for reading it. Some will find it ice-cold water; for others such water is of vintage quality. But it is not a dilution of Christian doctrine. Either it is not Christian doctrine at all, or it is its essence.

Miss Wodehouse is giving the content of one kind of religion. She does not force the reader along the road of abstract argument to her position, but with the magnificent realism of the great school of Idealists in which she was bred, she seizes religious experience in its concreteness and implicit wholeness: it can begin anywhere, and it leads everywhere. She explores this self-developing responsiveness (beginning with the response to some need or some perfection) which enlists us on the side of some good and will lead us far into the truth; and on the other hand, she explores the massive and ubiquitous goodness of the universe, which has power to uphold and compel and penetrate the individual self. This body of religious experience, veracious, first-hand, brought home to common recognition, she develops by discussion of the concepts of the Christian faith, chiefly as they are expounded by theologians whom she most respects and with whom she would most like to be in substantial agreement. In this approach to theologians, she uses the amenities of intellectual discussion with spiritual grace, and strains out of her position to approximate to theirs, and strives to use a common language in a common sense, but without the least equivocation or compromise, and with no disloyalty to the philosophical discipline and habitual scrupulousness of a life-time. For all the warmth of her desire to express the inwardness of the Christian position in a way that will satisfy Christians and herself, we know all the time unmistakably what her own position is and that she stands there unwavering. This is excellent. It would be unreasonable of rationalists to exclaim impatiently about it. Miss Wodehouse is expounding a lay religion, as Mr. Santayana did in his "Realms of Being," and she is fully justified in giving it any orientation of which it is capable, and

of seeking its affinity and incompatibility with any body of thought and belief. If such a religion becomes organized (and, in fact, it is the same religion in principle and substance, and formed partly under the same influences, which is organized in the Ethical Societies), then these relations become a matter of policy which is open to discussion. But there can be no justifiable objection to Miss Wodehouse's personal treatment of her theme on this ground. Nevertheless, her orientation towards Christianity is of public interest and importance. For there is sad need of unity in religious belief, and any attempt to explore and reduce the disagreement is a public service. It would be unreasonable to expect conversions; and equally unreasonable not to expect an enlargement of the boundaries of sympathy. And that is much.

But the distinctive service of the book will be to those many, perhaps very many, who are Christian in their bent, who have put away Christianity in their minds and have it still in their inward parts. To these, the book is indispensable. It makes their peace with the past, and gives them their onward course.

Fertile thought, being both readily and widely applicable and endlessly corrigible, sustains a long and useful existence and can, and should, be propagated from generation to generation. Plato and Hegel have been pre-eminent fathers of strains of thought which have proved permanently fruitful in this way. Such strains can die out, and it is one of the functions of culture to secure that they do not, so long as they can continue to live by their own vitality. In this book, and it is not the least valuable of its services, Miss Wodehouse pours into current thought the unlabelled discoveries of the half-forgotten Idealist philosophy, and they come with the freshness and spontaneity of necessary ideas. For Miss Wodehouse is a particularly happy instance of the truth that philosophy and religion, assimilated and appropriated, develop the vital quality of the original person. It is this authentic person, of no school, whose words here have an immediacy and a veracity which demand a full, wide, and friendly hearing.

H.J.B.

ECONOMIC DESTINY. By R. G. Hawtrey. Longmans, 21/-.

FULL EMPLOYMENT IN A FREE SOCIETY. By Sir William Beveridge. Allen & Unwin, 12/6.

It would be imbecile to take Sir William's magnificent Report as a book for review. It is a cause: a summoning of the nation to a new declaration of war; and in another sense, it is itself the opening phase of the campaign. Also the contents of the Report have been made widely known by ample summaries in the Press. Thus it imposes itself as a standard of comparison which must be invoked in any discussion of the life and death issues which economic matters inevitably raise in the present state of human affairs; it brackets itself with any book on our economic destiny.

Mr. Hawtrey does not sound the trumpet; the solitude of the study broods over his faultlessly lucid and quiet sentences. But his meditation is not less earnest than Sir William's summons. And the difference of their approach, of their background of experience, of their theoretical outlook, not less than the difference of their prescriptions, makes their essential agreements more impressive. Mr. Hawtrey is confident that general unemployment can be avoided if the competent monetary authorities (unnamed) take full responsibility for stabilizing the flow of money, and if the guarantee of stable money ensures stable wages and prices. This policy has never yet been fully tried, and he argues that experience supports the belief that it can succeed if the competent authorities accept full responsibility and have enough skill, for he does not under-estimate the complexities, and speaks of "the delicate, almost treacherous, credit apparatus by which the creation and extinction of money are regulated in a competitivist society." Sir William, of course, argues that a fully planned economic policy is necessary, instituting control of private investment integrated in a policy of planned public outlay, long-term contracts for buying imports, and Government control over the siting of industry.

But the threat of recurrent general unemployment is swallowed up in Mr. Hawtrey's imagination by a still darker evil which overshadows all economic questions. For the continued insecurity of international relations is an imperative to every sovereign authority to make the economics of national power the first principle of public policy. Without a solution in the field of international political relations, there must be a complete and final sacrifice of the end to the means, the utter failure of mankind to live. Fear of this final disaster haunts Mr. Hawtrey, and he would have us as the supreme matter of present choice take the necessary steps to turn in time from both wealth and power as economic ends, to welfare, the good life in all its spontaneous abundance; and he considers how welfare may be attained in a competitivist and in a collectivist order of society. Thus, like Sir William, he postpones that issue as not the matter of necessary immediate choice. As much as both are morally in earnest, both are agreed that the necessary ends of welfare can be obtained by national policies without forcing the issue between the competitive and the collective principles. The working of the plainly necessary controls will put us in a better position to reach a judgment on that issue. But both make it abundantly clear that, whatever the system, success cannot be achieved without national and international policies which are understood and accepted by all and worked loyally in mutual confidence. Hence the enormous importance of wide and full discussion of the new policies and their principles, so that governments, employers, wage-earners, consumers, political parties and electors shall be prepared to play their parts intelligently and responsibly. If one thing is certain, it is that confusion or discontinuity (not to speak of conflict) in economic policy is enough to wreck modern industrial civilization. There inevitably will be conflict (not to speak of confusion or discontinuity) in economic policy unless there is full and genuine mutuality of interest, governed, of course, by the "tacte des choses possibles." The price of failing to recognize and be bound by common interest is common disaster. But common interest does not already exist: it has to be created. Sir William Beveridge has summoned us to create it. And Mr. Hawtrey, in the study if not at the Treasury, must have murmured, hear! hear!

H.J.B.

THE ROAD TO SERFDOM. By F. A. Hayek. Routledge, 5/-.

Dr. Hayek's book, first published in March, 1944, has been issued in a' cheap reprint, which recalls the bid for wide influence which Lord Keynes made in his re-statement of the economic theory of employment three years before the war. The early attempt to make this book widely read is to be warmly welcomed, for the author challenges assumptions which are widespread. He earnestly pleads with us to think that we may be mistaken, to look with open eyes on what we are about to do before we take the irrevocable steps which many think are the necessary steps of progress, but which he believes are blind or wilful steps leading backwards to the kind of world from which the individual has been emancipated by the growth of a complex of principle and practice during the centuries of commercial development. If we are on the eve in this country of a decisive change from the liberalism of a free market economy to the socialism of a planned society, it is very important that we shall take a long look at the devices and principles whose benefits we are about to lose by our own choice, and see whether or not we feel any compunction or uneasiness in following those leaders who would throw away this inheritance for a hope which Dr. Hayek tries to show is in realization nothing other than the totalitarian evil which we unite in repudiating and are engaged in fighting. The book is dedicated to Socialists of all parties.

Dr. Hayek writes as an Austrian economist who sees with dismay that the development of socialist doctrine in this country is following the course which it took three decades ago in Germany, where the influence of socialist theory justified National Socialism and made it acceptable. This makes him the more vividly aware of our own liberal tradition of economic doctrine and political theory, which

is the root of our justification in the conflict with Germany because it represents the historical emancipation of the individual from tribal regimentation by "the cake of custom" and from feudal subjection to a defined status. This liberation of the individual should be definitive. Yet, in spite of our sacrifices in its defence, we are about to throw it away in the name of progress. It is this delusion, the idolatry of strange gods, from which he would deliver us.

The argument is that the inevitable trend to large scale monopolies and surplus production, and therefore the breakdown of the competitive market, and the consequent need for central control and comprehensive economic planning, is a train of unfounded assumptions, in that the tendency to monopoly is a development deliberately encouraged by unjustified policy, and surplus production is a popular illusion. Thus central control is not a need but a choice, a false and dangerous one because the more economic relations and processes become complex the more necessary it is that they shall be self-regulated by the impersonal automatic mechanism of the market and not crudely governed by the arbitrary decisions of men incompletely informed and not impartial—which is necessarily the alternative. If free economic processes are understood, they can be made to work successfully by providing the right conditions. Otherwise, the economic plan, since no general agreement on a complete hierarchy of social values is probable, will be left in practice to some party confident enough to undertake it; which means a resolute and unscrupulous minority who will find themselves driven, and will not hesitate, to use more and more force and fraud to make their plan succeed. In other words, the first steps in central planning require society to go all the way to the totalitarian state, complete with its necessary apparatus of power: the party-dictatorship, the concentration camp, the propaganda machine, the bully and the spy and the machine-gun. Dr. Hayek traces these things as the necessary practical outcome of the theory of German Socialists of the years before and after the last war, whose language, he says, we are now speaking in this country. Once the road of central economic planning is taken, it is necessarily the road to serfdom.

By contrast, he draws the picture of the rule of law, which is not the giving of orders by one set of men to others, but the laying down of the conditions which all must observe in whatever they do. The application of invariable principles to all particular cases is the only form of social coercion which a society that would be free can afford to tolerate. A planned society must inevitably transform this conception of law, and thus destroys the condition of liberty, the possibility of individual planning, the achievement of liberalism, the civilization of the West.

The argument, though not unfamiliar, will shake up our ideas because it comes from an observer rather specially well-qualified to bring this kind of criticism against current views. There is a readiness amongst socialists to welcome the realistic geo-politics of Hitler because of the opportunity which it gives of large-scale planning. There is (sometimes concealed, sometimes outspoken) contempt for the principle of self-determination and the claims of small nations. These are tendencies confined and encouraged by the influence of Continental Socialists of the older school (of the Second International), who are living here in exile. One sometimes bears in talk inspired by these influences the fanaticism of irresponsible political rationalism, and sees the sinister possibilities of socialist theory which Dr. Hayek so well understands.

The future in any case is one of difficult possibilities. Dr. Hayek has put the spotlight upon some of the difficulties and dangers which we shall have to reckon with if we try to make the State an instrument of community instead of merely an instrument of reconciliation between private interests. It is true that a party can get control of the State and employ force and fraud to enslave everybody in the name of the community and for the common good. The danger is vivid. Of course it can happen here. But it is not a necessary consequence of central planning. The chapters which seek to show that it is are the least convincing in the book. The attempt to make the State an instrument of community is an adven-

ture; but it is not an impossible, uncontrollable, and unnecessary adventure. It promises a richer fulfilment of individuality and not its destruction. The difficulties and dangers of trying to maintain a liberal democracy and free market economy might be painted in colours no less lurid. We have to pursue difficult policies by agreement in any case. If we want to achieve a more fruitful union of the individual and the community facilitated by the State, we shall have to solve over again the problem of power, establishing, limiting, and de-centralizing power for that purpose. This will mean new forms of association and new concepts. It does not mean throwing away the achievement of civilization. Dr. Hayek, like Burke, will find that he is contending against providence, that is to say, against men who are resolved upon changes which do promise a new and progressive phase of civilization. They accept his counsel, but they cannot take his advice.

H.J.B.

## TAIL-PIECE.

WHAT IS A CLASSIC? There is only one classic, namely, Virgil. Because only he combines the four maturities: of mind, of manners, of language, and of literature. The definition is Mr. T. S. Eliot's, and thus he sets a goal to strive for and a standard to judge by. Thus, even more, does he start an inexhaustible debate, for it is impossible to reject the definition out of hand, and impossible to confine the discussion to literary values.

STANLEY SPENCER. Has everybody seen the panels which are at the National Gallery in the War Artists' exhibition? An hour in looking at them is perhaps the best refreshment to be had in London.

HUMAN ORGANIZATION has come to resemble playing chess with moving pieces. The marvel is that the game goes on. It cannot go on indefinitely without new rules.

FACING A FUTURE of difficult possibilities, one cannot be consistently optimistic nor pessimistic. That is the climate for action.

A STANDARD. Can the possibilities of the next twenty years in China or in India be measured by the achievement of the Soviet Union?

SUMMARY of many recent speeches and pamphlets, and outline for many more: "The new world order depends not upon that and that but upon this and this. . . . Thus, and thus alone, can mankind . . . . There is no hope for the world unless . . . . Only on this sure foundation can we build . . . ." Does this symptom indicate the world's disease or a sickness common in ourselves?

DUMBARTON OAKS. The *Manchester Guardian* forecasts that "When at last the new organization is trotted out for our inspection we shall see a mule—a very strong mule, no doubt, with a good kick and a ready bite, but still a mule which by its very nature cannot beget anything for the future." The worst of it is that the mule will be kicking its heels in the world for so many years that when the day does come for serious work to be done, it is too likely to prove very mulish.

## TO THE READER

This journal, which is published quarterly by The Ethical Union in a new format in place of "The Ethical Societies' Chronicle," will be expanded when paper is made available. Meanwhile, although short of space, we want our readers to have the opportunity of expressing their views and we invite correspondence.

Subscriptions for one year (2/4, post free) should be sent to The Ethical Union, 41/42, Chandos House, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1.

